

divided areas situated on the inner side of the ends of the print head, the same main scan print area being formed by the plurality of the main scans.

25. (New) An ink jet printing apparatus for forming an image on a print medium by using a print head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting ink of a same color, the ink jet printing apparatus comprising:

means for performing a plurality of main scans by scanning the ink jet head relatively with respect to a same print area of the print medium; and

means for forming a thinned out image according to a different thinning out mask onto the same print area by using a different nozzle of the ink jet head in each of the plurality of scanning operations, the different thinning out mask being used in each of the plurality of scanning operations for printing onto the same print area,

wherein each of the different thinning out mask has a plurality of portions for thinning out image data corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction, and

wherein the thinning out rate of one of the plurality of portions in the thinning out mask and the thinning out rate of another of the plurality of portions are different from each other.

26. (New) An ink jet printing apparatus for forming an image on a print medium by using a print head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting ink of a same color, the ink jet printing apparatus comprising:

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means for performing a plurality of main scans by scanning the ink jet head relatively with respect to a same print area of the print medium; and

means for forming a thinned out image according to a different thinning out mask onto the same print area by using a different nozzle of the ink jet head in each of the plurality of scanning operations, the different thinning out mask being used in each of the plurality of scanning operations for printing onto the same print area,

wherein the thinning out mask is defined so that thinning out rates corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same main scan print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each other.

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27. (New) An ink jet printing apparatus for forming an image on a print medium by using a print head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting ink of a same color, the ink jet printing apparatus comprising:

means for performing a plurality of main scans by scanning the ink jet head relatively with respect to a same print area of the print medium; and

means for forming a thinned out image according to a different thinning out mask onto the same print area by using a different nozzle of the ink jet head in each of the plurality of scanning operations, the different thinning out mask being used in each of the plurality of scanning operations for printing onto the same print area,

wherein the thinning out mask is defined so that printable duties corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same main scan print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each

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28. (New) A recording apparatus for recording the using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said apparatus comprising:

a scanning means for scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

a setting means for setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

a thinning out means for thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting means, each of the plurality of different thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

a record controlling means for recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out means, during each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,

wherein said thinning out means thins at a different thinning-out rate, each thinning-out image data corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction, on the basis of the thinning-out mask.

29. (New) A recording apparatus for recording using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said apparatus comprising:

a scanning means for scanning the recording head relative to a same

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record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

a setting means for setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

a thinning out means for thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting means, each of the plurality of thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

a record controlling means for recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out means, during each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,

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wherein said thinning out means thins image data, on the basis of the thinning-out mask which is defined so that thinning out rates corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each other.

30. (New) A recording apparatus for recording using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said apparatus comprising:

a scanning means for scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

a setting means for setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

a thinning out means for thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting means, each of the plurality of thinning-out

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masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

a record controlling means for recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out means, during each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,

wherein each of the different thinning-out mask has a plurality of portions for thinning-out image data corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction, and

wherein the thinning-out rates of the plurality of portions are different from each other.

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31. (New) A recording apparatus for recording using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said apparatus comprising:

scanning means for scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

setting means for setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

thinning out means for thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting means, each of the plurality of thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

record controlling means for recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out means, during

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each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,  
wherein the thinning-out mask is defined so that printable duties  
corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same main scan  
print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each  
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32. (New) An ink jet printing method for forming an image on a print  
medium by using a print head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting ink of a same color, the  
ink jet printing method comprising the following steps:

performing a plurality of main scans by scanning the ink jet head  
relatively with respect to a same print area of the print medium; and  
forming a thinned out image according to a different thinning out mask  
onto the same print area by using a different nozzle of the ink jet head in each of the plurality of  
scanning operations, the different thinning out mask being used in each of the plurality of  
scanning operations for printing onto the same print area,

wherein each of the different thinning out mask has a plurality of  
portions for thinning out image data corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas  
obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan  
direction, and

wherein the thinning out rate of one of the plurality of portions in the  
thinning out mask and the thinning out rate of another of the plurality of portions are different  
from each other.

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33. (New) An ink jet printing method for forming an image on a print medium by using a print head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting ink of a same color, the ink jet printing method comprising the following steps:

performing a plurality of main scans by scanning the ink jet head relatively with respect to a same print area of the print medium; and

forming a thinned out image according to a different thinning out mask onto the same print area by using a different nozzle of the ink jet head in each of the plurality of scanning operations, the different thinning out mask being used in each of the plurality of scanning operations for printing onto the same print area,

wherein the thinning out mask is defined so that thinning out rates corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same main scan print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each other.

34. (New) An ink jet printing method for forming an image on a print medium by using a print head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting ink of a same color, the ink jet printing method comprising the following steps:

performing a plurality of main scans by scanning the ink jet head relatively with respect to a same print area of the print medium; and

forming a thinned out image according to a different thinning out mask onto the same print area by using a different nozzle of the ink jet head in each of the plurality of scanning operations, the different thinning out mask being used in each of the plurality of scanning operations for printing onto the same print area,

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wherein the thinning out mask is defined so that printable duties corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same main scan print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each other.

35. (New) A recording method for recording the using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said method comprising the following steps:

scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting step, each of the plurality of different thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out step, during each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,

wherein said thinning out step thins at a different thinning-out rate, each thinning-out image data corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction, on the basis of the thinning-out mask.

36. (New) A recording method for recording using a recording head having



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a plurality of recording nozzles, said method comprising the following steps:

scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting step, each of the plurality of thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out step, during each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,

wherein said thinning out step thins image data, on the basis of the thinning-out mask which is defined so that thinning out rates corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction are different from each other.

37. (New) A recording method for recording using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said method comprising the following steps:

scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out

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masks set by said setting step, each of the plurality of thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out step, during each of the plurality of scans, and completing an image to be recorded on the same record area,

wherein each of the different thinning-out mask has a plurality of portions for thinning-out image data corresponding to each of a plurality of divided areas obtained by dividing the same print area in a sub-scan direction different from a main scan direction, and

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wherein the thinning-out rates of the plurality of portions are different from each other.

38. (New) A recording method for recording using a recording head having a plurality of recording nozzles, said method comprising the following steps:

scanning the recording head relative to a same record area of a recording medium a plurality of times;

setting a plurality of different thinning-out masks as thinning-out masks used during the plurality of scans for recording of the same record area;

thinning out image data using the plurality of different thinning-out masks set by said setting step, each of the plurality of thinning-out masks being used during each of the plurality of scans; and

recording thinned-out images on the same record area in accordance with the image data thinned out by said thinning-out step, during each of the plurality of scans,